Northern Messenger

Lillie Pozer 388209

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A Christmas Carol.

All hail! the merry Christmas morn,
The joyous day our Lord was born,
We celebrate:
All hail! the day of love and mirth,
The day that saw our Saviour's birth,
Early and late
At Matins and at Vesper's bell,
His love and praise we will forth to tell
With joyous heart.
With song and revelry and glee,
We keep the day right royally.
Others apart
Dream of the past in dusky gloom,
While dear dead faces fill the room,
Smile as of yore,
Long silent voices softly sound,
And rippling laughter echoes round,
Hushed evermore,
For Death's cold hand has laid them low,
They cannot feel or joy or woe,
'Good-bye, good-bye.'

Thus age and sorrow mark the day,
But youth must needs be bright and gay,
Tho' age may sigh,
Tears for the absent, for the dead,
May Christmas o'er the living shed,
A shining light
To man on earth, peace and good will,
The angels' song is echoing still,
As on that night,
Filling the whole wide world with song,
Strengthening the weak, helping the strong;
'Unto all men,
To all who mourn, the poor, the weak,
That promise from on high shall speak.'
Speak now as then.

—Rose A. Lee.

Gift Sunday.

(Dyson Hague in 'Parish and Home.')

What is gift Sunday?

Well, it is one of the most delightful and helpful things, not only a pleasure but a blessing. On the Sunday nearest to Christmas, before or after, the scholars of the Sunday-school, boys and girls, infants and Bible classes, and teachers alike, all come, bringing in their hands a gift, and the gifts are brought up and piled on the platform on the superintendent's table, an eye gladdening and heart-cheering mass, to be afterwards taken and distributed amongst the home poor and needy; or, what is better, sent to some mission in the remote parts of our diocese to cheer and help them at Christmas time.

Now, the basis of this happy institution is two-fold. First: The thought that a very large number of our weaker and poorer schools can be brightened and helped by a little Christmas effort on the part of schools better off. Second: The idea that a vast majority of our Sunday-school scholars have come to that time when it is of the highest importance for them to learn that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

One of the best things about Gift Sunday is the way it takes.

In my parish, St. Paul's, Halifax, it was from the very first attempt a perfect success.

We had a very large number of poor children, a very large number, and it was thought by the most timid that the poorer ones might feel it very much if all the others were bringing presents and they could not; but we found to our surprise that the very poorest even were able to bring some little article, and that in many cases their gift was better than that of one better off. Well do I remember from year to year that happy day. 'Next Sunday,' the rector announced, 'next Sunday will be Gift Sunday. The teachers and scholars are requested to bring their presents to the Sunday-school at three o'clock.' And at three o'clock you should have seen the Sunday-school.

There was a little girl hugging a flaxen-haired doll in her arms, while her sister dragged along a little doll's carriage.

There was a boy with a big jumping-jack, while his little comrade was carrying a wooden horse. There was a sixteen-year-old girl, looking rather ashamed of the large parcel she half concealed under her arm, which looked suspiciously like a big Noah's ark, and a fair-haired teacher, who held in her hand a box of halma. Some were dragging carts along, others wheeling doll perambulators. But all were happy and all most orderly.

And now the bell sounds. The hymn is given out, then all is hushed in solemn awe in prayer. The sweet story of Matt. ii. 1-11 is read: 'And when they were come into the house they saw the young child, and when they had opened their treasures they presented unto him gifts.'

Then, one by one, beginning with the youngest, all came up, bearing their little gifts, which are laid upon the table on the platform. Higher and higher the pile begins to grow. Dolls and toy horses, jumping-jacks, balls and tops, and games in every conceivable variety. The teachers and Bible class scholars bring in their offerings of books, story books, Prayer books, Testaments and Bibles.

At last the happy work is ended; a brief address is given, a hymn is sung, and all go home, feeling, indeed, how true it is, it is more blessed to give than to receive. Then on the morrow a little busy band come and sort the various articles, and four large packing cases are filled with books and toys, which the ship or the boat son bears away to some distant rural mission or parish to gladden the hearts of the Sunday-school children there.

Gift Sunday!

Could not all the town and city parish churches practice this happy plan each Christmas season? Try it once, and you will, I am sure, try it always.

Try it, and you, too, will perhaps appreciate the gladness and the joy that comes each year to the boys and girls and teachers of St. Paul's Church, Halifax.

'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Theatre-Going.

REASONS THAT APPLY TO ALL DOUBTFUL AMUSEMENTS.

(By F. B. Meyer.)

I was asked the other day to give my opinion about theatres and theatre-going. I suppose if I were to deal with that question I should be asked my opinion about joining in a country dance, of reading novels, and of wearing ornaments. Our minds so easily drift into questionings, the solution of which we like to have given patly and concisely by someone whose opinion we have come to respect. But in this way we are deprived of the benefits of that soul-discipline and training which are beyond price. That is, you cannot buy them ready-made from any one else; you have to acquire them from the teaching of God in your life.

Instead, therefore, of giving my sentence on these questions, it seems wiser to urge all those who are in perplexity to ask, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me do?'

Let us see how this will work out with respect to the theatre. Supposing you are really anxious to know God's will, you may argue the matter out on paper. Drawing a line down the middle, you may place on the one side all the reasons for going, and on the other those that make against it.

FOR GOING.

One may learn lessons that may help to mould character and conduct.

I have a taste for the drama.

I do not wish to appear singular.

Many professing Christians go.

It seems to me a part of a liberal education.

It is surely a stronger method of life to go to these places, and resist the evil, than to abstain from going for fear of contracting evil influences.

FOR ABSTAINING FROM GOING.

Theatre-going is inimical to a close walk with God, for the mind is too excited and dazzled to be able to settle to the evening and morning prayer.

Theatre-going is avowedly one of the chief amusements of worldly people, and surely it cannot be a pastime for one who has been redeemed out of this world, for the service and possession of Christ.

Theatre-going brings its devotees into close contact with some of the worst people in all the great cities and towns, who congregate there; and the contact is sought in the way of pleasure; and not of business, or desire to save them. Surely such fellowship must come under the injuncton, 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.'

Theatre-going helps to maintain a system which is inimical to the best interests of those who are employed on the stage, as is proved by abundant testimony of those who have gone through the fire.

Thearte-going on the part of a Christian will set an evil example to those who are undecided and hesitating, and who may be led much further than the Christian who first set the example was prepared to go.

Theatre-going exposes the soul to the spirit of voluptuousness, the excitement and stimulation of our sensuous nature; and in some cases suggestions are made which stir thoughts and passions that had best be left dormant.

Such are some of the reasonings which I suppose some of my fellow Endeavorers would pen on either side of their paper. There may be others which have not occurred to me, but these will suffice. Now give a numerical value to each of them, weigh these and assign some numeral for their value, then ask solemnly and prayerfully, 'What would Jesus like to have me do?'

It is not necessary to argue whether or not a theatre may be kept pure, nor to contend for an ideal theatre, nor to quote names of authorities on this side or that. All this is beside the mark. We have taken the pledge and made the promise to abide in all things by the good pleasure and will of Jesus Christ. If he is not satified, it matters little what else may be said. The soldier is not expected to reason or argue or advance his own opinions, but to abide by his captain's orders; and if, at times, there is no specific charge as to his method of action, then it is for him to consider what the captain would be likeliest to demand, what may fairly be deduced from all that he has said and ordained in the past. But always and everywhere the soldier must not entangle himself with the cares and riches and pleasures of this world, lest they choke the word that it become unfruitful, and he displease him who chose him to be a soldier. —'Christian Endeavor World.'

Class Use Of a Geography.

An intermediate teacher, whose class is in the main room, always carries his geography to Sunday-school. His idea is 'to indelibly locate the map of Palestine in the minds of his class, and to brush away all doubts about the reality of its present existence.' The geography supplies the missing link between the maps in the Bible or lesson helps, and those of the secular schoolroom. Almost any plan which clears away the multitude of popular misconceptions of biblical geography would seem to be well worth trying.—'Sunday School Times.'

Premiums.

A good many have already started to work for premiums. Have you? The premiums are generous. New subscribers are easily secured. But the subscription time is at its height just now. Better get to work.

A Compliment From Ottawa

'Perhaps,' says the Ottawa 'Journal,' 'one hardly goes too far in saying that no other newspaper in this country, even it may be on this continent, has been conducted from the beginning with more resolute honesty, independence, and desire to be just and right than the Montreal 'Witness.' The success of the paper is an evidence of the fact that character counts for success in journalism. The paper has always refused advertisements of theatres, hotels, operas, lotteries, doubtful medical schemes, and other announcements which usually pay well. In its career it has been excommunicated, or at least placed under the ban, by the Roman Catholic Church. In spite of the keenest competition the 'Witness' has prospered steadily, nor is it too much to say that the mainspring of its prosperity has been public confidence in its motives and character.'

'Daily Witness,' $3.00. 'Weekly Witness,' $1.00.

JOHN DOUGALL & SON,
Montreal.

"In His Steps."

Everyone should read this book. It is Sheldon's masterpiece. We send it post-paid for 15c. JOHN DOUGALL & SON,
Publishers, Montreal.

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want to mention it to you until the last moment, so that you would not worry and get nervous over it. I shall have simply nuts and apples for refreshments. Shall I tell you how I happened to plan a party of such unprecedented simplicity? Well, last week I was over at Mrs. Bales's for a little while, and Mary told me that her mother was quite distressed because her brother, John, has fallen in the way of associating with those Pembell and Chilcote boys, who, you know, are quite wild. He had just told them that he expected to go to the dance at the Hall Christmas night. You know beer flows freely there on such occasions, and they were both quite distressed over the matter. I made up my mind right then and there to have a party Christmas night; for I knew if I invited John he would come.' A slight blush suffused her face as her mother smiled a little at these words.

'So I invited Mary right then and there, and before I left John came in, and I invited him, and he said he would come. If you had seen Mrs. Bales's and Mary's faces when he said that, you would know that my Christmas present to them gave them genuine comfort and pleasure, such as I am sure no gift purchased with money could possibly do. I don't suppose John appreciates my gift to him in keeping him away from those rude associates; but I think it is no less valuable a Christmas present on that account, and perhaps some day he may appreciate it. Besides being a bit of Christmas pleasure for these three, the party will give pleasure to each of my friends; and I don't think they will miss the usual refreshments much amid all the fun and games I have planned.'

The mother expressed her approval of the plan for the party, and Edith continued her work with increased pleasure. Nuts and apples abounded in Kansas that year; and as Edith has gathered a large supply of the nuts, and a farmer had given Mr. Marvin all the apples he wished to carry away, since they were rotting on the ground and there was no market for them, the refreshments would be a matter of no expense.

Christmas dawned bright, clear, crisp, beautiful. Edith was in a bustle of pleasant excitement.

'Papa, I have only a happy face and a kiss for you and mamma this morning instead of the usual gifts,' she said, gayly. It was not difficult for her to see that her gifts made them very happy. She was sure she had never seen them look quite this way when she had in previous years presented them with pincushions, handkerchiefs, and the like.

'If you don't object, papa, I wish that we might drive to the church a little earlier than usual this morning, so that, after leaving you and mamma there I can drive over to get Mrs. Lamb. She is a little better this week, but not able to walk the distance to the church, and she says she is positively hungry to hear the singing and a sermon; so I told her I would come for her this morning.'

'My daughter has thought of a very pleasant Christmas present for Mrs. Lamb,' the father replied, laying his hand in loving pride upon the fair young head. 'We will quite willingly go a little early.'

Mrs. Lamb was a young widow whose heart had been buried with her husband a year ago. Consumption was slowly sapping her life and she was at times quite melancholy, questioning bitterly the kindness of a Providence which had so afflicted her. The sermon that morning, with its joyous, confident note of love and trust, was to her soul as food to the fainting. As they drove back to her home, she said to Edith:

'I had dreaded the coming of this holiday, and shrank from its laughter and merry gift-giving; but the singing and the sermon have comforted me, oh! more than I can tell you, and the remaining hours of this day will be full of peace.'

To be an instrument in bringing the gift of peace to a sad soul—was not that something incomparably better than to be the donor of a fascinator or a sofa pillow?

On her return home Edith went to the south window, where her carefully tended plants stood, and lifted out a pot containing a lily with one beautiful white blossom crowning it. She had copied that wondrously beautiful passage beginning, 'Consider the lilies, how they grow;' the sheet containing this passage and the lily were to be her Christmas gift to her dearest friend, Maud Strole. Maud was an orphan, with the care and support of a sister of twelve devolving upon her. She was eking out a poor living by doing plain sewing; but it was work which she did not enjoy, neither did she have any special fitness for it. She had been trying for weeks to find more lucrative employment in the way of office work, but without success. This Christmas morning found her discouraged and hopeless. Edith had longed to give her some substantial present, which might not only give her pleasure as a gift coming from a friend, but supply some of the necessities which her narrow income left unprovided.

Edith rang the bell at the door of her friend's home, and with a hearty 'Merry Christmas!' handed her the lily and the neatly copied Scripture passage and was off again in an instant, saying that she must hurry over to old Mrs. Wales's to read to her an hour before dinner.

Maud loved flowers as few people do, and the beautiful lily touched her heart and fitted her to read in solemn mood the verses Edith had copied. Just why it was so, it is difficult to say; but as the day wore on Maud's courage and hopefulness returned, and the little sister, hearing the cheerful words and seeing the bright looks, felt a burden roll away from her little heart, and felt light-hearted and gay as the day demanded. Here was one Christmas present of joy of which Edith never knew.

'Why should I fear?' thought Maud. 'He is watching over us and planning all our lives—everything will come right if I do my part. I have half a mind to go to see Mr. Dillon this very afternoon. He is miserly, disagreeable and cranky; but his office is the only place in town where I have not tried to get work; I believe I'll go and see if there is not an opening for me there.'

She found Mr. Dillon in his office, as she felt sure she should do, in spite of the fact that it was Christmas; for it often happens that the 'richest man in the town' feels that he cannot afford a holiday. Mr. Dillon carried on a large loaning business, and many a hapless farmer in the region around about always thought of his heavy mortgage and the thin, shrewd face of Mr. Dillon at the same time.

In reply to his brusque question as to whether she thought he could furnish employment to everyone who happened to want it, Maud, full of the thoughts the lily had brought, said, quite calmly:

'No, Mr. Dillon, certainly not. If you have no need of my services, I will go elsewhere. I have not the least fear but that one who is willing to work can find work.'

Something of triumphant faith in the tone arrested his attention, and soon, in answer to his questions, he had the whole story of her life, of the Christmas lily and of the Scripture passage from her lips. When she left his office she was engaged to do office work for him at a salary just twice as large as the amount she had been earning by her needle.

The party Christmas night was a grand success, for there seemed to emanate from Edith such a spirit of thoughtful kindness toward all, of genuine 'good will toward men,' that everyone felt it and reflected it. Games, fun and laughter made the hours pass swiftly and happily. Just before they separated for their homes Edith brought out a dish of nuts, each of which was tied with a tiny ribbon and bore the name of a guest. Each of these shells, from which the meat had been removed, contained a little scrap of paper bearing a Christmas thought or message.

What the Christmas message was that was given to John Bales no one ever knew. What his mother and sister did know was that for the society of the 'wild set' from that day his fondness seemed to die away.

After all the guests had departed Edith took her favorite low seat beside her mother to 'talk it over.'

'I think it has been the happiest Christmas I have ever known, mamma dear,' was the remark with which the conference closed.

Annie's Christmas Gifts.

(By Lilian Grey.)

'Have you commenced to plan for Christmas presents yet, Annie?' asked Nellie Brown, as she overtook her friend on the way to the library.

'Oh, yes; I've done a vast amount of thinking, and I'm going to turn over a new leaf this year.'

'Indeed! How many new leaves do you turn over in the course of a year, Miss Annie?'

'Plenty of them. I'm conscious of my failing, and I don't blame you for laughing when you know how I go right back to my old ways; but I'm in earnest this time, and I've even begun to work out my plan.'

'Do tell me; I'm all impatience to hear!'

'Well, you know I have a host of friends that I give presents to, and although I don't give any one thing of great value, yet it all counts up dreadfully. Papa gives me an allowance every month, and I save up before for my presents, and last year I went in debt for some, too, and I had to go with shabby gloves on the street a long time, for those I received at Christmas were in evening shades. Then there were some unexpected things came up that I wanted to contribute to, so I had to ask papa for more money twice, and consequently he said I was extravagant.'

'Fathers have a habit of saying that, I guess. I know I hear the same remark frequently.'

'Well, I don't intend to go through with any of that this year, and I'm going to make a lot of presents, too; but all to new people, and the others will get just a hand-painted card all round. They shall be just as pretty and as suitable to the season as I can make them. I have a few done already. You see the outlay in money is small, and I've got all the rest to spend in another way.'

'I see; but what better way can there be than in making presents to one's friends in holiday time? Oh, there are always the heathen of course.'

'I'm not thinking of foreign missions just now, though; but if I tell you all about it, Nellie, you mustn't tell, for I want it to be a surprise all around. I'm going to make Elwood Gray a present of a child's box of tools. You know what wonderful things he carves out with that little old knife of his, and now the doctor says he may have to stay in the house all winter. Then you have seen how Norah Finnigan carries that forlorn old doll everywhere she goes, and dresses it in any rags she can find. Well,

she is to have a doll—a nice large one, and I am going to make its clothes, for I've got any quantity of pieces of silk and lace. I can hardly wait to see how the child will act when she gets it, but I've no doubt that she'll bow down and worship it like a veritable little heathen. And Granny Coles is to have a shawl of grey zephyr, I think, but large and warm anyway; and a pair of crocheted slippers; those I shall make myself. I want several pairs of slippers for others, too. I don't know what to give our washerwoman yet, but I'll find something she wants and won't be likely to buy for herself before then; and Jennie Snow is to have 'The Youth's Companion,' for a year, and—well, those are the main ones, so I won't explain any further. Perhaps, now, you think I'm a simpleton, but to tell you the honest truth, I've never taken so much pleasure in planning out my Christmas gifts before. Now let's hear the verdict.'

'Really, I think you're a dear good girl—so good that I'm half afraid of you! But you always get lovely presents yourself, and how will you feel not to make any in return? Oh, there are the cards, of course, and you paint so nicely.'

'Yes, I worried about that at first, and then I settled it in this way; you know it's more blessed to give than to receive, so I thought I'd let my friends have their reward that way this one year. And now, seeing I've made you my confidant, if you had planned anything for me, you can transfer it to someone else in the same manner, if you please. There are so many who have so little or no extra pleasure at holiday time, Nellie.'

'I know it, Annie. I'll think your plan over, and perhaps follow it partly, although I've got every cent laid out in my mind, and haven't half enough to go around now. But how busy you'll be with all you've planned to do, and the extra Sunday-school work, too.'

'I know it, so I'm not going to take out any more books this month, but just devote myself to work. I really think December is the happiest month in the whole year!'—'Intelligencer.'

At Christmas-Tide.

(By Mary D. Brine.)

Hail to the Christmas-tide again;
Let all the joy-bells ring;
Come, lads and lasses, here's a song
That every heart should sing:
'Peace — Peace on earth! Good will to men!'
Sing it with might and main;
And may your hearts endorse the words,
Over and o'er again;
For, loving 'Peace,' strife flies afar
From us, as days go by;
And with the wish, 'Good will to men,'
How can we help but try,
To do our best—'good will' to show
To those we daily meet?
'Tis loving as we would be loved,
Makes living glad and sweet,
The dear Christ's birthday! honored now
Where'er His name is known;
The 'Little Child' of humble birth,
Yet heaven and earth his own!
How wonderful that for our sakes,
That glorious birth took place;
And men beheld Divinity
In that dear baby's face!
How wonderful that for our sakes,
That Lord who gave us life,
His own at last, for us laid down
'Mid sorrow, pain and strife!
Oh! let us, then, for His dear sake,
His blest commands obey,
And in our hearts hold Peace and Love
To greet the Christmas day.
—'Morning Star.'

Ring Sweet Bells.

'Christmas is coming!' thinks little Tim;
But what can the Christmas do for him?
His home is a cellar, his daily bread,
The crumbs that remain when the rich are fed;
No mother to kiss him when the day is done;
No place to be glad in under the sun.

But, dear little children, you understand,
That the rich and the poor all over the land
Have one dear Father, who watches you,
And grieves or smiles at the things you do;
And some of His children are poor and sad,
And some are always joyous and glad.

Christmas will bring to some of you joys—
Food and plenty, frolic and toys;
Christmas to some will bring nothing at all;
In place of laughter the tears will fall.
Poor little Tim to your door may come;
Your blessings are many—spare him some.

The Christmas bells will sweetly ring
The songs that the angels love to sing—
The song that came with the Saviour's birth:
'Peace, good-will, and love on earth.'
Dear little children, ring I pray,
Sweet bells in some sad heart that day.
—'Morning Star.'

Correspondence

A merry Christmas to you all! Already you are planning your gifts for the happy day, and wondering, perhaps, what Christmas will bring to you. Some of you have been at work for weeks planning some little surprises for father and mother, and have had great difficulty in keeping the gifts hidden away until the great day should arrive. How mother's eyes will sparkle over that little gift, as her boy proudly declares, 'I made it all myself'! How father will appreciate that little penwiper that his wee girlie has made for him! How glad each one of you will be with the little token of love from your dear parents, even if they are not able to give you as large presents as you had wished for.

Now, I want to bring you a little message this happy Christmastide, it is one that is old yet always new. 'Remember,' said the Apostle Paul, 'the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive'! What can we give? Most likely each one of you knows of some one poorer than yourself to whom you could make some little present. Then there are the poor little children in hospitals to whom gay little cards and scrap-books are always acceptable. But there are many boys and girls among our readers who have no money for presents and almost nothing to make them of—what shall they give? Ah, will you say to your mother on Christmas day, 'Mother, I make you a present of a boy who will always do your errands cheerfully? Or, 'Mother, for Christmas I give you a little girl who will try not to grumble or frown for a whole year.' What do you think mother and father would say to that?

What do you think your teacher would say if you told her you were going to try to be attentive and obedient for a whole year? How would the dull boy over in the corner like it if you began loving him and helping him with his lessons as a Christmas gift?

What present shall we make to-day to our Lord Jesus Christ whose birthday it is?

THE PRIZE.

Do not forget that there is a prize offered for the best letter in January. We give to-day in the Honorable Mention list the names of those who have written us letters for which we have not had room, but we may print some of them later on.

HONORABLE MENTION.

Bertha, Ayr; Julia, Edna, Alta; Lizzie, Keady; Roy, Oakland, Ont.; Jean, Manitoba; Alma, Hantsport; George, East Wentworth; James M., Little River, N.B.; Will Henry, East Wentworth, N.S.; Jean A. B., Woodbridge; Steele, Amherst; Annie, Nons Mills; Maggie Jane, Centredale, N.S.; Pearl, Hawthorne, Ont.; Annie, Union, Ont.; Arthur, Brighton, P. E. I.; Annie Pearl, Bouchette; Celia, Flesherton; Mabel, Windsor, Ont.; Annie G., Howick, Ont.; Bertha, Carberry, Man.; George, Ohio., N.S.; Violet, Heathcote; Mary Elsie, Balgonie; Adele, Waubaushene, Ont.; Cornelia May, St. Ann's, Ont.; Gracie, N., Waubaushene; Florence J., Waubaushene; Olive M., Ingersoll; Debbie W., New Germany; Addie, East Rawdon.

Will L. S., of Port Nelson, please send her full name and address to the Editor of the Correspondence, that we may forward a letter for L. S. which has been received by us.

Chesterville, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I get the 'Messenger' every Saturday night, and am so pleased with it. I live on a farm and like it very well. We had to walk a mile and a quarter to school, but we built a new school house across the road from our farm.

WILBURN, aged ten.

Hillsburg.

Dear Editor,—My home is in Midland. I am visiting friends in Hillsburg and enjoying myself very much. Midland is a beautiful place in summer. It is situated on the Georgian Bay. My Sabbath-school teacher took his class for a sail in his steam yacht one day. We started at eight o'clock in the morning. We had our dinner on the rocks. We called at Wahbaushene, Port Severn, and had our tea at Methodist Island, and got home at half-past nine. Everybody enjoyed themselves immensely. I belong to the Mission Band. We sent a box of clothes to the North-West Indians this year.

M. A. G., Aged 15.

Tweedside.

Dear Editor,—We have been taking the 'Messenger' about twenty-seven years, before I was born, and are taking it yet. I send it to my cousins. I live in the country, and our house is about a quarter of a mile from the Oromocto Lake. In summer we bathe and in winter skate. My father is a farmer, he has ninety-three hives of bees, fifty sheep and two horses. I am the youngest one in the family and the only girl.

Canaan, N.S.

Dear Editor,—My papa keeps the post-office. My mother is dead, but I have a step-mother, and she is very good to me. My papa is a farmer.

CRACE B.

South Granville.

Dear Editor,—I live on a farm. I have two brothers and two sisters. I think I can get six subscribers to the 'Messenger,' please send me an order sheet.

DANIEL M'K. aged thirteen.

Sydenham.

Dear Editor, — We get the 'Messenger' from the Sabbath-school, and I like it very much. We have no Sabbath-school in the winter. Our Sabbath-school begins in the first of May, and ends in the last of October. My teacher has been very kind to me. She gave me a beautiful big card, for regular attendance at Sabbath-school.

GRACE H., aged nine.

Burwell Road, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I am the only little girl in the Township of Cardoc, on the banks of the Thames, who writes to the 'Messenger.' My little friends at school like to get my paper to read, and I think there will be some of them subscribe for it shortly. We have a dog called Sandy. My little sister, seven years old, has been leading him around with a string for a year, and at last mother made a harness by cutting a crown out of an old felt hat and sewed straps on the sides of it for tugs, and then hitched him on the sleigh,

so she is greatly delighted with him. It is surprising how a dog can learn to draw a load.

MYRTLE, aged twelve.

Toronto.

Dear Editor, — I am a little boy eight years old. I was very much interested in L. S.'s letter. I was converted at the age of seven. I think that the 'Messenger' is almost the best paper that you could read. Your friend,

LAURENCE.

Portage du Fort.

Dear Editor,—I live on a large farm. We are getting a furnace put in our house. I have a class in Sunday-school of two little boys and two little girls.

MARY B. C., Aged 11.

Berwick, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I live on a farm in the beautiful Annapolis Valley. We have oxen, cows and young cattle. We have a horse named Dandy, and a colt eighteen months old, named Bonnie. My brother ploughs with her and Dandy. I have two pets, a kitten and a bantam hen. I think our Sunday-school lessons are fine. I take much pleasure in studying them. My mamma takes the 'Northern Messenger,' and she lends them to others to read. She is trying to get others to take it next year. She has got one subscriber now, and I think she will get more. I always look for the Correspondence first. We all go to Sunday-school, My brother is librarian.

STELLA, aged eleven.

Hartney, Manitoba.

Dear Editor,—This is a small town, but being surrounded by a good grain district, is a very busy place. There are five large elevators and a grist-mill. The Souris River is about half a mile from the town. We have good fun on the ice. We have a fine school here.

WILLIE.

Amherst, N.S.

Dear Editor,—I have taken the 'Messenger' for two years, and like it very much. My grandfather takes the 'Witness,' and I like to read the stories, especially on the 'Boy's Page.' Our kitten's name is Kitchener. My father is a merchant, and has a store not far from our house. I am proud to belong to Cumberland County, which was the banner county of the Dominion plebiscite. I always give my papers away to poor children or give them to people who can't afford to take it.

CHESTER, aged 11.

Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Dear Editor,—I like the 'Messenger' very much. I can read it all myself. We have been taking it about two years. I don't think I would do without it. I belong to St. Paul's Church. My birthday was this month. I got a lovely prayer-book from my mother, with all the hymns in the back of it. One of my little friend's name is Elaine. She lives right next to us. She gave me a lovely carpet-sweeper, it is called 'Little Helper.' I have four sisters and one brother.

ETHEL, aged eight.

Newfoundland, Old Perlican.

Dear Editor,—I live with my grandpa and grandma ever since my mamma died. My pa lives in Carbonear, he is to be station-master there. Aunt Eliza has been taking the 'Messenger' for some years past. Now she takes it for me. I have a little pet dog, his name is Jubilee. There is an iron mine opened seven miles from here. There is a large pier building here, and a railway track cut. The train is to run back and forth bringing iron from the mine. I am collecting for missions. I have two dollars and forty cents, and am expecting to get more.

WILLIE, aged seven and a half.

Glen Levet, N.B.

Dear Editor,—I go to school every day. I like to have my lessons well, for I don't like to get down in my class. My brother, Boyd, goes with me, and I help him with his lessons.

ADELINA, aged eight.

Glencoe.

Dear Editor,—I have a little dog called 'Ponto,' and she is brown, and has a very bushy tail. I have also a calf called 'John Rolfe,' and a younger one called Druid.

GORDON, aged twelve.

HOUSEHOLD.

Eight Aprons.

Only one dollar to spend for presents! How am I to make it go round to my eight girls?

All at once came the happy thought, 'aprons.' So eight different patterns of Lancaster gingham were bought for three daughters, three daughters-in-law, one granddaughter, and one niece to be. While we were at the tea table that night Hugh left, and, when we were assembled again in the sitting-room, we found he had labeled all the ginghams for each girl with the pet names and odd names of the family, and written little bits of paper and pinned on each one.

I let them all stay on, and this is the way I cut the aprons: Two yards and a half long; take off a two-inch piece for belt; cut the rest in half; take off two inches for strings on one breadth, which is used for the front; split the other, and put half on each side; gather to belt eighteen inches. So I made my eight aprons and sent them on their far-off journeys, costing five cents a yard, or thirteen cents apiece, the father paying the postage, which, it must be confessed, was half the cost of the gingham.

The first news I had of them was from one of the young husbands, who took the gifts from their Christmas-tree, and wrote: 'The girls squealed and rowed over their aprons, and had more fun with them than over any "boughten" things you could have sent. Anne's pockets created great excitement, and Hugh's labels sent the aprons to the proper recipients just as well as if they had been written by a strictly sane person.'

Then Stella wrote: 'We had our gifts in the dining-room after breakfast, and, for people who expected very little, they made quite a showing, especially the kitchen-apron, which I needed sadly. We had a good laugh over the little papers, which we did not discover at first, and over Anne's pockets.'

From Grace: 'The apron is most welcome.'

From Helen: 'Thank you very much for the nice aprons. Both Margaret and I initiated them at our Christmas dinner and like them ever so much. We had on our good gowns, and the large aprons protected them, and we displayed them proudly among our gifts.'

From Winifrede: 'I love every stitch in it, because my dear mother made it all by hand.'

From Fredericka: 'My apron is grand. I had gingham for another, but the making is the greatly appreciated part, and I have it on this evening.'

From Lois: 'In some ways I am a very improvident person, and an instance of that fact is that I never have any aprons. When I dust I cover my clothes with lint, and spend more time than I need in removing from my own person the dust that I just removed from my furniture. But while I often deplored the fact that I was not properly equipped for my work, I never remedied the evil. Now I can dust with great pleasure, and thank you ever so much for my big apron. I wore it this morning doing my room work.'

From Anne: 'That brings me down to thanking you for my good, generous-sized gingham apron. It happened to be just what I had often expressed a wish for and was in real need of; but the best part of the whole thing was its size. I had never expected to get one large enough, and suspect I wouldn't have fared so well this time if you hadn't made a job lot all for such big girls, and I got the benefit of it. You see, my mother has always gone on the principle that, as Mother Nature made me after so small a pattern, she would go one better, and so I have always gone around with aprons cut off at my knees, like the little old woman on the highway. Now I wear my new gingham with pride, and enter the kitchen with confidence and in safety. So you see it is truly appreciated.'

This true story is written to teach the lesson that a little gift with love is welcomed, and that a little money can give pleasure to a whole family of loved children.—'Womankind.'

Making It Easy.

'Dear me, I don't see how you can do it!'

'Do what? Just let the young people have an out and out merry time of it on Christmas night?'

'You say your sister's family are coming to dinner, your girl of course goes out in the evening, and yet half a dozen or more young folks are coming to visit in the evening. Of course you'll have to get up the treat.'

'Oh, the treat won't trouble anybody. I'm going to do exactly as we did last year.'

'Yes, but those stylish Merlin girls on the hill told our Ida—she was away last Christmas, you remember—that they spent last Christmas evening at your house, and never had a pleasanter time in their lives. They mentioned particularly that the refreshments were splendid! Ida wondered what you had.'

'Well, it's easily told. When Tom and the girls said they wished six or eight of their frends, the Merlins among the rest, could come to the house Christmas night, I said they could and welcome if they were willing to do as we used to in our New England home.'

'"Pray how was that?" asked Tom, bridling a little.

'I reminded him that Norah expected to go on her little Christmasing as soon as dinner was over, and that I always helped her clear away so lengthy a feast. The table I told him should be neatly spread with nothing on it but the cloth, cups and saucers, plates and paper napkins. On the sideboard should be a platter of cold turkey which I would slice after dinner, chips, fancy crackers, salteens, a pie or two, cake, nuts and raisins, figs and grapes, all ready prepared for serving. A pot of coffee, also one of chocolate should be on the range. Whenever he or any of the other laddies chose to invite a young lady to the dining-room they could treat her to whatever the sideboard afforded, or make merry by running to the kitchen for a cup of hot drink.

'I certainly think those young people were going and coming from the dining-room the whole evening through. Tom had sniffed a little and observed something about "a regular counter lunch" when the proposal was made, but this year he proposed carrying out the same programme, or I might perhaps more properly say menu.

'I remember Tom called out, "The pie's given out, mammy." "All right," I said, "go to the pantry and get another." And pretty soon Lizzie wailed, "The coffee's all gone, mammy." "All right," said I, placidly, "go to work and make some more." Then a prolonged cry, "O mammy, the turkey has all disappeared." "Never mind, go to the cellar-way and get the bones." There were some pickings left, and I did set up a chicken 'gainst a special call.

'They picked both turkey frame and chicken bare; Susie's children were here, you know, so there were fourteen young people in all, and now I have described what the Merlin girls styled "splendid refreshments." Tom last year ventured something about ice-cream, but I told him no, there could be no fussing about anything extra, the general provision of the season would be enough. And we found it a very simple matter to clear away the sideboard treat the next morning, while it gave me scarcely anything extra to do on Christmas afternoon.'

This is a very true showing of what has been done time and time again in a large family, when the young people wanted a little company on Christmas night, and after the long, abundant dinner it was too much for the tired housewife to think of getting up a regularly laid 'treat.' It has been proven often that an entirely informal company is the merriest one imaginable, and it is a great mistake to crowd so much into a joyous holiday that all pleasure is lost in a sense of cruel fatigue.

There is quite an art in making things easy, and on holidays the most scrupulous housewife is fully justified in refusing to undertake anything like an extra spread, Just set young people to helping themselves, and how the good things will disappear. It is doubly jolly to see Tom or Will pouring chocolate into a tiny cup which he must fill and refill until he must needs search about for more of the raw material. There is always a kind of good comradeship in sharing these merry feasts, especially when it becomes the part of prudence for some matronly girl to advise as to how much coffee or chocolate goes into making another potful. Do not refuse the merry-making because of the work involved. Make things easy, and they will be all the merrier, and young people are much the same all the world around.—'Christian Work.'

LITTLE FOLKS

Katie's Surprise.

(L. Penny in 'Temperance Banner.')

It was really too bad that Katie's accident should occur two weeks before Christmas, the day of all days she liked the best. It was hard to be shut in the house and kept in one room, when she wanted to go out and look in the shop windows gay with holiday decorations. She had planned to go out and spend the dollar that she had saved for her mother's Christmas present; she had not quite decided what she

would buy with it. A dollar would purchase a nice warm silk muffler, a pair of gloves, or four prettily embroidered handkerchiefs tied in a fancy box. She had learned this on that afternoon when she was last out, when the runaway team knocked her down at the crossing.

It was hard for the little girl to be cheerful under the circumstances, with her foot incased in plaster of Paris, and she unable to get about. To make matters worse, her mother, who was a dressmaker, was unusually busy, and could not give Katie her time. Every day she plied her needle at the homes of her customers. It was well for Katie that her mother had promised to give the entire week preceding Christmas to Mrs. Williams, a woman of generous heart and gentle spirit, an old customer who took a warm interest in her neat dressmaker. Very naturally she was interested in Katie, as were also Nellie and Jack, who asked daily how Katie got on.

One morning the dressmaker reported that she had left Katie in tears because she could not attend the Christmas-tree celebration at the mission school on Christmas eve.

'I am sorry for her,' said the mother, 'because it is the happiest night in the year to her, to which she looks forward during the entire twelve months. She will have to be content with hanging up her stocking this year, in which I shall put some candy and nuts; and I hope to finish in season her new dress of red cashmere, on which I can sew only when she is in bed and asleep.'

Her words reached Nellie and Jack in the next room.

'Jack,' said Nellie, 'I have an idea! Why can't we help Katie? How much money have you?'

'Just fifty cents, and I have plans for spending every penny. What do you want to do?'

'Why can't we get ready a Christmas-tree for the poor child? If you could spare twenty-five cents you could buy a nice little tree, and mother would surely give us some candy and oranges to put on it, and Aunt Jane would give us something. I have forty cents left, and all my presents are laid in, so I feel rich. Mother owes me ten cents for dusting the parlor. With my money I can buy a doll and some trinkets.'

'All right,' said Jack, 'I'll help along. I'll get the tree this afternoon.'

The 'idea' was carried on so successfully that about four o'clock on the afternoon before Christmas there bloomed before Katie's eyes the gayest little tree she had ever seen, winning from her such expressions of surprise and delight, that Nellie and Jack felt more than repaid for all their labor and self-denial.

'Momsie, I wish you could have seen Katie's face when Nell and I had finished loading the tree, and put it before her! Talk about being glad! Why, my joy over my new bicycle was nothing compared to hers! It was dull and stormy out of doors, but there was a big lot of sunshine in that child's face. It fairly beamed upon us, and she thanked us so it made a fellow feel kinder mean that he hadn't done something of the sort before, and it cost us so little.'

The Squirrel's Christmas.

(Margaret Dane in 'Youth's Companion.')

Bessie lives in the country, where the snow stays white and pure in the fields till it melts away, and where the dear little gray-coated squirrels scramble up and down the

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LESSON I.—JAN. 1, 1899.

Christ the True Church.

John i., 1-14. Memory verses 9-12.

Golden Text.

'In him was life and the life was the light of men.' (John i., 4.)

The Story.

This is the Christmas story as an angel might tell it. First the Word, who is Jesus, was—not was created, for he was before all created things in the beginning with God, God himself. The original Greek says even more emphatically, 'God was the Word.' In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth (Gen. i., 1.) the Son of God shared in his labor, for 'without him was not anything made that was made.'

'In him was life' (John v., 26.) and his life gives light and life and love to men. The light shines in darkness and the darkness can not overcome it, (the margin of the revised version reads thus), and the darkness cannot understand the light.

God sent a man named John to testify of the light, and to proclaim that that true Light was coming into the world as a Man. The Word, the visible expression of the Father's love, should come, and all who should receive him as God should be regenerated or born into the family of God. He knew beforehand that most of his own people would not receive him, he knew beforehand what agonies he should suffer before his work should be accomplished, yet he did not withhold himself—'the Word was made flesh,' the Son of God took upon himself the nature of humanity that first wonderful Christmas morning. Christ dwelt with men, and to those who received him he revealed the glory of the Father and his nature of grace and truth.

Suggestions.

For six months we are to study the beautiful story of our Saviour's life by the 'beloved apostle' John. Last year we studied in Matthew's gospel the human nature of our Lord, but John's story reveals to us the oneness of Jesus with his Father. Our Lord Jesus Christ is a man, a Jewish man, who reigns in heaven because he is God. Perfect God and perfect man. This is a mystery far too deep for us to understand now, but if we believe it here we may understand it perfectly in heaven. A little child can not understand how steam makes a great big engine go so fast, but his inability to understand does not alter the truth. There are many things in this world that we must as sensible people believe without understanding.

Each teacher should see that his scholars are provided with bibles, and not depending on 'lesson sheets,' which can not but give a child the impression that the bible is a series of little anecdotes having no particular connection with each other. Young people should be given an accurate knowledge of the scriptures, such as they can only get from the book itself. They should be taught that God's word is not a collection of parables and anecdotes, simply, but one majestic message from God revealing his love for mankind, and his hatred of evil. The Old Testament has the same authority as the New, for our Saviour quoted from it many prophecies and testimonies concerning himself. (John v., 39: Luke xxiv., 27, 32.) Each of the writers of the New Testament quote from the Old, there are about six hundred and forty references to the Old Testament in the New.

If any teacher feels that he cannot provide his scholars with whole bibles, the next best thing is to give them Testaments, or the Gospel by John, in large print, the latter can be obtained at the Bible House, Phillips square, Montreal, for one cent a copy! These little books are within the reach of every one, and would make a pleasing and useful New Year's gift to your scholars. It would be a rather good plan to mark the lessons in the book, so that your class would be without the usual lame excuse of not knowing where the lesson is. The first quarter's lessons are as follows.

I. Jan. 1 Christ the true light. John i., 1-14

II. Jan. 8. Christ's first disciples. John i., 35-46.

III. Jan. 15. Christ's first miracle. John ii., 1-11.

IV. Jan. 22. Christ and Nicodemus. John iii., 1-16.

V. Jan. 29. Christ at Jacob's well. John iv., 5-15.

V. Feb. 5. The nobleman's son. John vi., 43-54.

VII. Feb. 12. Christ's Divine Authority. John v., 17-27.

VIII. Feb. 19. Christ feeding the five thousand. John vi., 1-14.

IX. Feb. 26. Christ at the feast. John vii., 14, 28-37.

X. Mar. 5. Christ freeing from sin. John viii., 12, 31-36.

XI. Mar. 12. Christ healing the blind man. John ix., 1-11.

XII. Mar. 19. Christ the Good Shepherd. John x., 1-16.

XIII. Mar. 26. Review.

Questions.

1. By whom was this gospel written?
2. Who created the world?
3. Who was sent to bear witness of God's Son?
4. Did God's chosen people receive his Son?
5. How can a man become a son of God?

John the Evangelist.

John was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and was probably born at Bethsaida, (by interpretation Fishville,) at the northern end of Lake Gennesaret. That his parents were respectable in rank, and easy in their pecuniary circumstances, is inferred from the fact that John was acquainted with the high priest, that his father employed hired workmen in his fishery, and that John was able to provide for the mother of Jesus at his own house, probably in Jerusalem. He is indeed called in the Acts of the Apostles 'unlettered;' but that simply signifies that he was not a professional man; that he was neither priest nor scribe, but an ordinary layman. His father, Zebedee, probably died before John's apostolate. His mother, Salome, appears to have been a woman of piety, who became attached to Jesus, not without high Messianic hopes, and lived within the circle of the Christian Church after the resurrection of Christ.

The first great point of John's life was his becoming, we know not by what means, a disciple of the Baptist. The tradition, however, is found in some early writers that Zebedee was an uncle of the Baptist, and therefore the Baptist and the Evangelist were cousins. However this be, this discipleship attests the early religious tendencies of John, and doubtless inspired his heart with an expectation of a Messiah near.

The next great turn of John's life, and its most important crisis, was his acquaintance with Jesus. To this he was led by his discipleship under the Baptist. The deep interest with which at the latest period of his life he remembered his first introduction to Jesus, is shown by the fresh minute narrative he gives of it in the first chapter of his gospel. On the banks of the Jordan, afar from his Galilean home, he is standing; and he listens while the Baptist gives his testimony to the Messiah, freshly arrived from the scene of temptation, and at once and forever he receives the testimony. He is forthwith accepted by Jesus as his disciple, with a few others, as the rudiments of his future apostolic college. After the miraculous draft of fishes he was especially called to be, not only a disciple, but a teacher, a fisher of men. At the complete inauguration of the college, followed by the Sermon on the Mount, John is incorporated into that body. He is repeatedly named as one of the elect three, Peter, James and John. This James was his elder brother, and it is remarkable that these brothers were the first and last of the apostolic martyrs.

John was distinguished at once by the simplicity of his character and the ardor of his affections. And those affections had a double side: one of deep love for Jesus and his gospel, and the other of intense antagonism of heart for all opposed to Christ. Hence, while, on the one side, he was the disciple 'whom Jesus loved,' and who leaned upon the Saviour's bosom, on the other, he would have called down fire on the Samaritans, who rejected Jesus, and was significantly named 'a son of thunder.' And thus we see how, in the closing period of his life, he could, within a single brief period, write these epistles which are redolent with the deepest spirit of love, and yet record the visions of his Apocalypse in language of the most terrible sublimity.

The next great turn in John's life was his departure for the East to take apostolic charge of the churches planted by Paul in Asia Minor. This probably took place soon after the death of Paul, and would bring us to about A.D. 63 or 66. During his residence in Asia Minor he was banished by one of the Roman Emperors to Patmos, an island in the Aegean Sea. His life extended to the close of the first century of the Christian era. According to Jerome, he was a hundred years old.—Whedon's Commentary.

Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON.

In his being God had no beginning. No one but Jesus and the Holy Spirit was with God forever, and no one else is equal to God. A blessed Trinity whose friendship makes fallen man the happiest of mortals. Verses 1, 2.

How close the relation between light and life when our hearts are laid on God's altar and he has lit the fire. Verse 4.

Nothing but light can banish darkness. Verse 5: Genesis i., 2, 3.

Sweet was the message, faithful was the messenger, and merciful was the Master. Yet many would not believe. Verses 6, 7, 8: Matt. iii., 7, 8.

Jesus is the luminary from whom all other lights borrow their brightness. The light of reason as well as the light of faith comes from him. Verse 9.

Ignorance is never bliss when God is absent from the mind of man. Verses 10, 11: Psalm x., 4.

Jesus believed is heaven received, and the new birth is the greatest miracle on earth. Verses 12, 13.

When Jesus became flesh he came very near the sinner so that the weakest soul might grasp his loving hand. Verse 14.

Tiverton, Ont.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

The angel presence for the New Year. (Exodus xxiii., 20-25.)

The Teacher's Point Of View.

(Margaret E. Sangster in 'Sunday-school Times.')

The point of view of some teachers is the social one,—the bringing together of young people from different families, and fusing them into an agreeable weekly circle, like an informal and quite intimate club. This point of view is an excellent one from which to start, but it is valuable more for the opportunities it makes possible than for any lasting good which it accomplishes.

Other teachers are scholarly and diligent, make very thorough preparation, and to the lesson of the hour are able to bring much that is strong and suggestive by way of collateral reading and testimony. To be with such teachers is to a certain extent a liberal education, and their knowledge of literature and disciplined powers of intellect enable them to make Bible study very interesting. Sometimes, even, it is too interesting for real profit, as the efflorescence of poetry and the charm of science lead away from the Word. The teachers do not intend [illegible] but they have looked at the matter from the intellectual point of view, to the detriment of spirituality.

More and more it grows on me, after a happy life of service, that the only safe aim for us is to strive to be co-workers with God. In our classes there is given to us, in perhaps a closer degree, perhaps at closer range, the privilege of coming heart to heart with our scholars. The little group gathers with a beautiful loyalty around the teacher. All unconsciously the teacher is the scholar's model. There is absent something of the restraint of the secular school. There is present the very winsomeness of love, its potency, its abounding charm.

Shall we not, for ourselves, in these brilliant weeks of our winter work, seek a larger endowment of the Spirit? Shall we be contented with less than our Lord is willing and waiting to give us? Shall we not go to our classes seeing Jesus only, our point of view being his, our desire to bring all the resources of personality, prayer and consecration, to the conversion of our scholars? And then, shall we not try to lead them, as our Master and Friend would have us, into a way of self-denial, of loving devotedness, of rich outpouring for him, in his name?

Carry's Christmas.

(By J. E. Anderson.)

It was not till long after December had come and gone that I heard the story of Carry's Christmas.

I was simply one of the four lodgers in the boarding-house where Carry did everything excepting what the landlady did; and as the landlady did nothing, so far as I could see, except dress herself, sit in the drawing-room all day, and receive our rent as it fell due, Carry must have done all the work.

I marvelled greatly at Carry toiling from morning till night, and sleeping—or trying to sleep—I could not tell where. For I had sketched a little plan of the house, showing all the rooms, and I knew that every one of them was occupied; but where Carrie got to after we had all gone to bed, for a long time remained a mystery. At last, however; early one morning, I found a prayer-book in the little bath-room, and on the fly-leaf was inscribed—'To Carry, from a friend.'

'Carry,' I said, when I met her on the stairs later, 'do you sleep in the bath-room?'

'Yes, sir,' she answered, 'but only when the house is full, and sometimes I sleep in mistress's room.'

I knew the house was full, The four of us quite filled it. I sent for Mrs. Brand, the landlady, and told her that if Carry had to sleep in the bath-room I should leave the house.

'Indeed, sir,' said Mrs. Brand, 'it's only very rarely that the girl sleeps there, and I couldn't possibly carry on with three lodgers. Most times she sleeps in my room. I'm sure no one could be kinder to Carry than I am. She is a perfect treasure. As I says sometimes, you may take everything I have, but leave me my Carry.'

This was all very well, but going out the same morning I heard sounds coming from behind the closed door of the kitchen at the end of the hall, sounds of someone being beaten and thumped, which strangely belied Mrs. Brand's declaration. I stopped in the hall and listened.

Presently Mrs. Brand herself came out, looking flushed and angry, and carrying a stout walking-stick which she had taken from the hall stand. She looked guilty, too, when she met my gaze.

'I've been giving it to Jack,' she said, after a pause (Jack was the retriever). 'He's been and stolen and eaten a young duck I had for to-day's dinner.'

Presently I heard Carry singing softly:

'Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin,'

and I was somewhat reassured, although the voice sounded like a long sob.

We had all tried to show our sympathy for Carry. We put books back where we found them, we did not throw our used matches about or tear up papers. Carry had shown her recognition of these little things by telling us bits of her history. Her father was in prison. Her mother—and Carry's eyes glistened when she told us—lived at Peterborough, and had to work hard to keep her other five children—all younger than Carry, who herself was only sixteen. As for her mistress — Carry could never leave her! Mrs. Brand had come opportunely at the time of that great trouble, and by giving Carry a home and food had relieved her mother of at least one burden. This was the great debt which Carry owed her mistress, and, in spite of all we suspected, a debt which this simple girl felt must be loyally repaid. Disloyalty to her mistress would be ingratitude.

The third week in December soon came round. We were all off to spend the holidays with out people and have warm and cosy Christmases. Even Mrs. Brand took advantage of the opportunity which our absence would afford, and had arranged to leave home on Christmas Eve and stay over Boxing Day with her friends. And Carry? Carry was not going away.

'You see, sir,' she said cheerfully, 'I couldn't leave the house empty. I should have liked to have seen mother, but mistress says I can go in the summer, when some of you gentlemen are having your holidays.'

We all severally thought of Carry on Christmas Eve, and wondered how she was making the time pass. We learned afterwards that Carry's Christmas was spent in a police cell. Her mistress sent her out in a driving snow-storm to cash a cheque. Carry had cashed the cheque, but when she got back she could not find the money. Her mistress accused her of hiding it so that she might steal off to Peterborough on Christmas Day, to see her mother, and she hurried the girl, just as she stood, in an old, much-worn coat, that her mother had spared her, some sizes too large, and a big, rusty-looking umbrella that had been her father's, off to the police-station. An odd-looking object enough she was, but the pale sweet face was not that of a thief, and the inspector hesitated before he entered the charge.

That Christmas Eve the clergyman of the parish took it into his head to go to the police cells and say a few words of comfort to the unhappy inmates. As he went round his attention was attracted by the sound of a hymn. He drew nearer and found Carry singing, actually singing, in the midst of her misfortunes. He heard her story; he asked her some questions; and finally he bailed poor Carry out. He wanted to take her home to the vicarage, but she insisted on going back to Mrs. Brand at once.

'Mistress wanted to go and see her friends, and she will have to stay now if I do not go back; and, sir, she has been that good to me, you can't think. And will you come with me, sir? It's only a few turnings down.'

The clergyman consented. It was snowing again. He opened Carry's umbrella for her. As he did so, something fell with a thud in the snow. It was the little white paper bag containing the lost money, which had fallen out of Carry's hand into the umbrella when she closed it, on reaching home.

Mrs. Brand stared at the pair when she opened the door. Then the good man told her what had happened, and suggested that as she was going away, Carry might spend Christmas with him. But Carry made apologies and excuses until he gave way and left.

Mrs. Brand did not go away, but on Christmas morning, as the express steamed off to Peterborough with Carry inside, holding in her hand the little white bag whose contents were all her own to bring joy and happiness to her mother and brothers, and sisters at home, Mrs. Brand was kneeling in prayer for the same strength which had buoyed Carry up through months of suffering, asking forgiveness, and promising to make Carry's life in the future a bright and happy one.—'Children's Friend.'

ADVERTISEMENTS.

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(A Serial Story by the Advertiser.)
Chapter vii.

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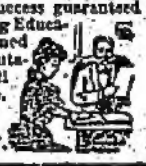

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